



Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Department of Public Health & Human Services

Presentation to the 2013 Health and Human Services
 Joint Appropriation Subcommittee

**MANAGEMENT AND DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AND
 TRANSITIONS DIVISION**

Economic Security Services Branch
 Department of Public Health and Human Services

Reference:

Legislative Fiscal Division Budget Analysis, Section B, Volume 4, Pages B-23 to B-28

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ECONOMIC SECURITY SERVICES BRANCH

The Economic Security Services Branch combines the public assistance, child support, child protective services and disability services onto an organizational structure which encourages coordination of social services. In this way the overall needs of families are addressed in a unified manner.

The position of Economic Security Branch Manager is included with the Management and Disability Employment and Transitions Division. This position ensures a coordinated approach

across the branch to empower Montanans as they overcome the barriers of poverty, disability, and mistreatment. The Branch Manager, working with Division staff has identified areas of common activity which are more effectively managed in one coordinated effort. These include services to infants and toddlers, access to health care, financial literacy and transitions from school to work.

OVERVIEW OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITIONS DIVISION

"The legitimate purpose of society and its governments is not to govern people and to promote the good life for them, but to empower them to govern themselves and to provide the good life for themselves and their fellow humans." Justin Dart

With this quote, the late disability rights leader and former commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration captured the can-do spirit practiced every day by Montanans with disabilities. They want to be dynamic and integrated contributors to society, actively benefiting from and participating in mainstream Montana life. Citizens with disabilities encounter many barriers to employment, independence, and transitions including negative attitudes about what it means to have a disability, discriminatory practices that deny or limit access, inadequate economic choices, shortcomings in disability skills and resources, and other barriers to full and equitable inclusion in society. To overcome these social and economic problems, Montanans with disabilities count on Disability Employment and Transitions Division (DET) and its network of non-profit disability service partners to help them learn how to do for themselves what they can do for themselves. The transition from dependence to independence is a long term investment that strengthens Montana's diverse communities, not merely the individuals served.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FUNCTIONS

Disability Employment and Transitions Division promotes successful employment, independence, and transitions by Montanans with disabilities through the following service efforts:

Employment

For Montanans with disabilities, employment begins with Disability Employment and Transitions Division. Getting and keeping a job makes it possible for anyone to be a responsible member of society. Last year 8,144 people received employment services from Disability Employment and Transitions Division. Here are our employment programs:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Blind and Low Vision Services
- Extended Employment Services

Independence

Self-determination hinges on knowing how to fend for oneself, continued supports and opportunities. Disability Employment and Transitions Division offers multiple programs designed to maximize independence and minimize dependence. Disability Employment and Transitions Division last year delivered independence-building services to over 25,000 people. Here are those programs:

- Independent Living Services
- Disability Determination Services
- Montana Telecommunications Access Program
- Independent Living for Older Blind
- Visual Services Medical
- Public Transportation Coordination

Transitions

High school students with disabilities face the same challenges and more than their peers without disabilities. Successful transitions from high school to work and/or post-secondary education for Montanans with disabilities require unique attention and collaborations across a wide spectrum. Disability Employment and Transitions Division provides the following programs:

- Montana Youth Leadership Forum
- Vocational Rehabilitation Transitions Services

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE 2013 BIENNIUM:

"I look forward to going to work. I have made 5 trips up north delivering batteries in the big truck. I go to Shelby, Cutbank, Havre, Malta, and Glasgow. I am also in charge of the warehouse and install batteries for customers. I also go on service calls. I now have Blue Cross and Blue Shield Insurance. I can SMILE with CONFIDENCE and am feeling very positive about everything. Working with people again has really made me feel good. I thank God for all good things that have happened to me, and it all started with vocational rehabilitation. I would like to tell everyone that is having troubles to never give up, because it will only get better if you put your mind to it and work hard. A positive attitude will make the difference." Comment from a Montanan served by Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Services in 2010.

What services has Disability Employment and Transitions Division accomplished in the last year?

Shown below are some of the ways Disability Employment and Transitions Division has helped Montanans with disabilities help themselves in 2012:

- Last year 830 people with disabilities went to work and earned an average of \$11.90 per hour. Together they will earn approximately \$14.1 million annually.
- The Disability Determination Services (DDS) adjudicated over 14,000 claims for Montanans filing for Social Security Administration benefits. Their priorities include people without health insurance, the terminally ill, and "wounded warriors" (veterans with disabilities) who could have complex medical problems.

The following table shows, by county, the number of Montanans with disabilities served last year using the DET programs. DET serves Montanans from every county in the state. Note that some of the DET programs were not able to provide county-specific information.

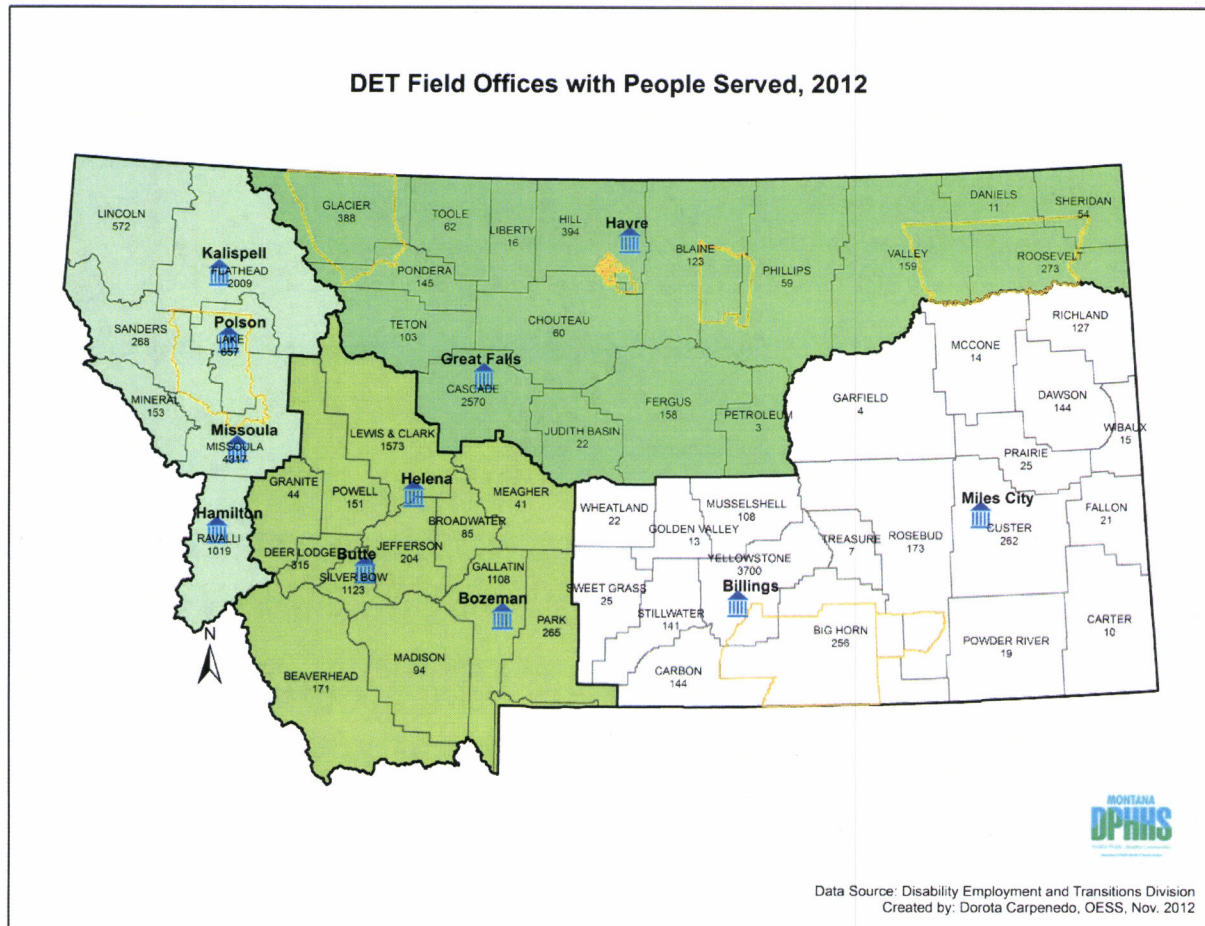
Table 1. Number of People Served By County

County	Number Served							Total
	Vocational Rehabilitation and BLVS	Disability Determination	Independent Living	Montana Telecomm Access Pgm	Older Blind	Visual Medical	Extended Employment	
Beaverhead	70	77		17	7	0	0	171
Big Horn	54	189		6	5	2	0	256
Blaine	20	97		4	2	0	0	123
Broadwater	21	56		6	2	0	0	85
Carbon	45	80		15	2	2	0	144
Carter	3	5		2	0	0	0	10
Cascade	1,132	1,259		64	74	3	38	2,570
Chouteau	20	37		0	2	1	0	60
Custer	110	127		8	5	3	9	262
Daniels	2	7		1	1	0	0	11
Dawson	65	74		0	3	0	2	144
Deer Lodge	73	222		15	5	0	0	315
Fallon	2	15		1	1	1	1	21
Fergus	42	96		8	12	0	0	158
Flathead	559	1,286		97	39	9	19	2,009
Gallatin	403	630		38	24	3	10	1,108
Garfield	2	2		0	0	0	0	4
Glacier	81	296		7	4	0	0	388
Golden Valley	2	9		2	0	0	0	13
Granite	11	18		11	4	0	0	44
Hill	127	253		6	8	0	0	394
Jefferson	71	113		9	4	2	5	204
Judith Basin	10	10		1	1	0	0	22
Lake	205	400		35	15	2	0	657
Lewis & Clark	574	872		58	27	0	42	1,573
Liberty	1	8		6	1	0	0	16
Lincoln	75	450		17	23	4	3	572
Madison	27	46		14	4	3	0	94
McCone	4	10		0	0	0	0	14
Meagher	18	19		4	0	0	0	41
Mineral	41	102		6	3	1	0	153
Missoula	1,378	2,645		84	99	12	99	4,317

County	Number Served							
	Vocational Rehabilitation and BLVS	Disability Determination	Independent Living	Montana Telecomm Access Pgm	Older Blind	Visual Medical	Extended Employment	Total
Musselshell	33	68		5	2	0	0	108
Park	66	181		7	7	2	2	265
Petroleum	0	2		1	0	0	0	3
Phillips	16	33		3	7	0	0	59
Pondera	25	101		15	4	0	0	145
Powder River	5	11		2	1	0	0	19
Powell	21	111		13	5	0	1	151
Prairie	9	15		0	0	1	0	25
Ravalli	331	573		69	35	5	6	1,019
Richland	55	68		3	1	0	0	127
Roosevelt	18	246		4	5	0	0	273
Rosebud	27	128		13	2	3	0	173
Sanders	63	177		18	9	1	0	268
Sheridan	2	44		5	3	0	0	54
Silver Bow	477	531		57	39	4	15	1,123
Stillwater	44	83		9	4	1	0	141
Sweet Grass	4	18		3	0	0	0	25
Teton	33	50		1	19	0	0	103
Toole	17	42		3	0	0	0	62
Treasure	4	2		1	0	0	0	7
Valley	31	103		11	14	0	0	159
Wheatland	1	15		6	0	0	0	22
Wibaux	3	12		0	0	0	0	15
Yellowstone	1,497	1,882		116	98	34	73	3,700
Unknown	114	111	1,235	0	0	0	0	1,460
Total	8,144	14,117	1,235	907	632	99	325	25,459

The following map in Figure 1 shows the location of the Vocational Rehabilitation field offices where counselors meet with clients. Counselors also travel to other communities to meet with clients locally.

Figure 1. Vocational Rehabilitation Field Offices



What projects have we accomplished/implemented?

Disability Employment and Transitions Division continues to find new ways to deliver services to Montanans with disabilities. We have explored and commenced new projects to reach more people.

- MVR/BLV contracted with the University of Montana/Bureau of Business and Economic Research to conduct a Return on Investment analysis on the MVR/BLV program. The results show for every public dollar spent, we get \$3.31 back in improved wages, reduced SSI payments and increased tax revenues within three years.

- Vocational Rehabilitation expanded the “Adopt a School” pilot that we initiated in the Missoula region in 2008. VR counselors work during normal school hours in select high schools across the state. This provides students with the opportunity to meet on their “turf”. Counselors are able to enhance the counselor/student relationship, develop relationships with school personnel and begin planning early to ensure students seamlessly access services as they transition from school to work.
- Public hearings are an important piece of gathering information to improve the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation/Blind and Low Vision (MVR/BLV) program. In addition to the state-wide public hearings held via video conferencing, this biennium MVR/BLV held public hearings on 5 of the 7 Native American Reservations. The Disability Determination Services (DDS) held disability hearings and the Vocational Rehabilitation Council held two of its quarterly meetings on Reservations.
- The Statewide Independent Living Council sponsored an American Indian Cross Cultural Workshop for representatives of the four Centers for Independent Living and several tribal members. The group increased their knowledge of American Indian culture and independent living through the sharing of experiences by various presenters with diverse backgrounds.
- Using ARRA money, MVR/BLV purchased video equipment for its field offices. They conduct bi-monthly training webinars with staff throughout the state and hold staff meetings in the local regions to reduce travel costs. Counselors meet with their consumers via video on days that they are unable to travel due to weather.
- MVR/BLV hired a statewide deaf coordinator to improve services to clients who are deaf or hard of hearing in all areas of the state. MVR/BLV launched Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in each field office; Montana has a shortage of interpreters, especially in the rural areas. When in-person, on-site interpreting services are not immediately available, technology provides for an interim solution in the form of off-site interpreting services through VRI.
- The Independent Living Housing Task Force identified and promoted the requirement of visitability—basic home access for all newly constructed homes. Visitability features: a zero step entrance on the main floor; doorways and hallways measuring 32 inches to 36 inches; and a half bath on the main floor with maneuver space for a walker, wheelchair, or scooter. The group advocated for, and accomplished, having visitability requirements included in the Montana Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, Department of Commerce HOME Investment Partnerships Program and the Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant Program.
- To address the needs of division staff who are blind, MVR/BLV is in the process of enhancing its case management software system for accessibility to all staff. Employees

with low vision or who are blind are unable to use all features of the current system because it does not comply with modern accessibility standards.

- Independent Living held a statewide symposium in Helena to address disability concerns in Montana. For example, independent living advocates asked Montana to apply for the Money Follows the Person funding that assists institutionalized Montanans to move to community-based services.
- The Montana Telecommunications Access Program, which provides relay services for Montanans who are deaf/hard of hearing or have disabilities that impair their use of telephone services, plans to provide funding to pay for video relay services. The federal government may soon require states to provide video relay services so deaf/hard of hearing telephone users can use their native sign language to communicate via video technology.
- Independent Living Services delivers their services through a statewide network of Centers for Independent Living. The four centers in Montana are augmenting their systems change efforts to include Montanans with disabilities in national, state, and local decision making. Their mantra, "Nothing about us without us," guides efforts to reframe disability as a natural and respectable human characteristic. They envision Montanans with disabilities having control over their own lives and the services they use. For example, North Central Independent Living, the center headquartered in Great Falls, collaborated with local government planners to integrate elements of the Americans with Disabilities Act in city zoning.

How well are the Disability Employment and Transitions Division staff doing for our Montanans with disabilities?

Below are just a few samples of the feedback that the DET team has received from people with disabilities regarding the effectiveness of our programs and illustrating just how effective our investment is in our communities:

- "You are responsible for my sanity as without the amplified phone I would no doubt be medically depressed - I depend on my phone for business and social contact; it allows me to live a fuller life." M.C., Helena, MT.
- "Thank you... thank you... - all of you. The equipment that you delivered/shared to use with my mother and father is a great fit. You have simplified life for Mom and Dad (A.H. and E.H.) and as a positive spin-off simplified life for my wife and I as their issues sometimes rapidly become ours." G.H., Bozeman, MT.
- "I thought that I would write you a letter telling you about a very fine experience I had with an employee of Montana Telecommunications Access Program. The equipment specialist was helpful setting up the phone and explaining how to use it. By golly, I now

have a phone with a printout screen so I can understand who is saying what. Thank you."
W.S., Stevensville, MT.

- "Today Connie H. came to my office and became a gymnast reaching all of the cords and working on the phone with CapTel customer service going through a trouble-shooting protocol. Finally, when nothing seemed to work, she switched out the phone. Works perfectly, and I am so grateful. Connie H, as always, is smart, thorough, respectful, doesn't waste time, and gets things taken care of. We are so lucky to have her at MTAP." JS, MTAP consumer, Helena, MT.
- After a few years of successful employment, a person who had been served by the vocational rehabilitation program returned to the local office and presented his past counselor with \$500. He wanted to help other people with disabilities receive services similar to those he received because he understood how important the assistance was to helping a person get a good start towards a career.
- The Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program means that Montanans with disabilities no longer have to fear the loss of their only access to health coverage simply because they want to work in order to try to improve their own lives. The program allows individuals with disabilities the opportunity to become tax paying citizens by allowing them to purchase Medicaid coverage. Unlike other insurance policies, Medicaid covers the unique healthcare needs that challenge some of our individuals with disabilities.
- "This letter is to let you know how much I appreciate Tiffany. She is extremely helpful, patient, kind and knowledgeable about her job requirements and responsibilities, and has been so prompt and thorough handling my claim. It is truly refreshing to work with someone who isn't irritated by phone calls and questions and who maintains such a great attitude. Customer/client service seems to be becoming a thing of the past in so many ways. I believe Tiffany is a wonderful attribute to your work force."
- "I would like to share with you my positive experience working with Mary Jo, on my application for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Thanks to the support and expertise of Mary Jo I am currently on Medicare and SSDI. I applied on line last spring and my application was sent to Helena last summer. The entire process was a good experience at a difficult time in my life. Mary Jo was very patient and thorough in answering my questions regarding my application. I worked for the State of Oregon as a DDS examiner in the 70s. I have a sense of the nature of the work, and work stressors that go with this position. Once again, I appreciate the important work that all of you are doing."
- "Thank you for accommodating me and my family and rescheduling my hearing multiple times. In addition, the DDS hearings officer made special arrangements to conduct my hearing in a private room in the Library after 5:00 p.m. The library is closer to my home and again Bernadette rescheduled my hearing 4 times."

- "I chose my goals and the services needed to meet my goals. I do, and this is a big plus for the program. The services are useful and help me to live on my own-very much so." Independent Living Consumer
- "I know that money is always a problem. But, I and people like me, who have lost all of our money because of inadequate insurance, are in a very difficult situation. It is getting increasingly difficult to get by on the funds provided by Social Security. Summit Independent Living Center makes my quality of life worth living. Anything that can be done to enhance their services should be done." Independent Living Consumer
- One consumer persevered over 10 years and 3 tries to complete her vocational plan. She faced many challenges, but kept battling back and the program was always there to support her. She credited the program and her counselor with helping her to see the potential she had and providing the support to achieve her goal. She graduated from college and obtained the job she had always wanted.
- An eighty-one year old retired farmer received services from Blind and Low Vision Services. He was introduced to multiple low vision devices and program staff helped him choose what would work best for him. He regained the enjoyment of his favorite pastimes: reading, gardening, and fabricating barbed-wire wall hangings. He commented: "I can't imagine what I would have done without the assistance and instruction from Blind and Low Vision Services."

Our staff accomplishments and award recognition in serving people with disabilities.

The fact that several DET staff members have received various recognition, even nationally, shows we employ knowledgeable people who are experienced and efficient in their jobs. They are effective as leaders who represent Montanans with disabilities properly, as well as their interests.

- MVR/BLV produced a video related to students with disabilities transitioning from high school to adult life. During our federal review, this video was highlighted as an "emerging practice".
- The Social Security Commissioner, Michael J. Astrue, presented a Commissioner's citation to the Montana DDS section chief of operations for outstanding service to Montana citizens with disabilities.
- During the 2012 Montana Association for Rehabilitation Conference, five Disability Employment and Transitions staff were recognized for outstanding leadership in the field of rehabilitation.

2015 BIENNIUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Department of Public Health and Human Services Disability Employment and Transitions Division

Goals and Objectives for the 2015 Biennium Submitted September 2012

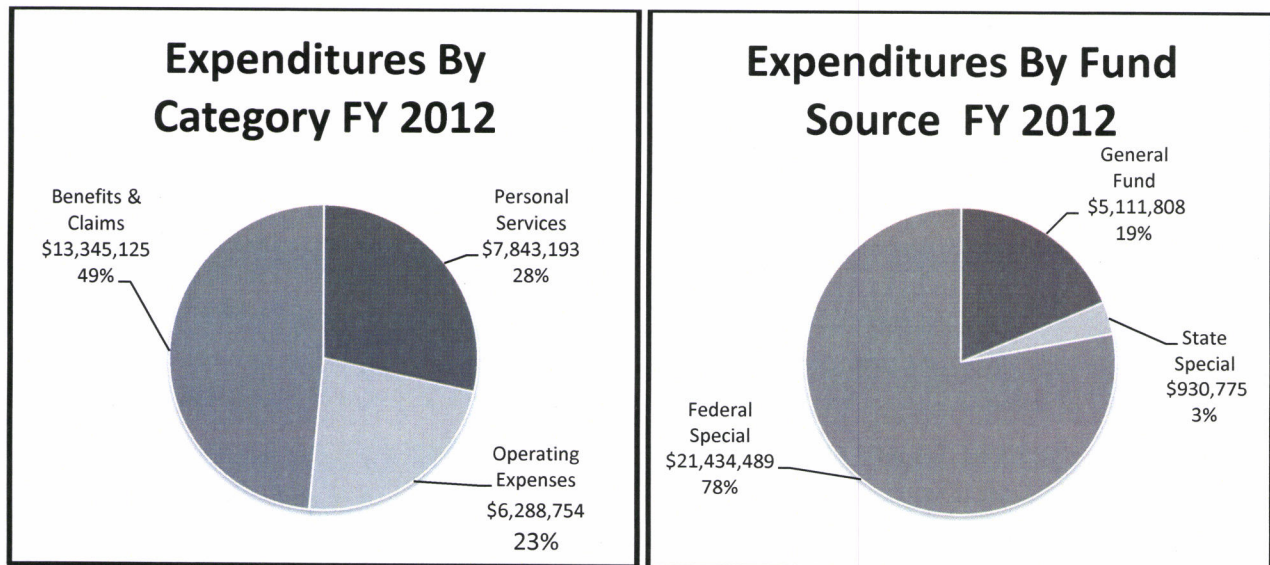
Goal: To assist continuously Montanans with disabilities, including transitioning students, to achieve independence so that they can live, work, and fully participate in their communities.

Objective	Measures
Assist Montanans with disabilities, including those students transitioning from school to work and/or post-secondary education, into gainful employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The objective is measured by successfully meeting Vocational Rehabilitation standards and indicators as developed by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.
Provide accurate and timely Social Security disability adjudications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The objective is measured by successfully meeting the federal Social Security standards on accuracy rates and timeliness.
Improve the quality of life for Montanans with disabilities through education, innovation and technology by enhancing communication options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The objective is measured by maintaining the current level of equipment distributed to individuals who are eligible for the Montana Telecommunications Access Program.

FUNDING AND FTE INFORMATION

	2012 Actual Expenditures	FY 2014 Request	FY 2015 Request
Disability Employment and Transitions Division			
FTE	146.00	146.00	146.00
Personal Services	7,843,193	8,191,660	8,203,679
Operating	6,288,754	6,322,760	6,342,327
Equipment	0	0	0
Grants	0	0	0
Benefits & Claims	13,345,125	13,516,735	13,691,777
Debt Services	0	0	0
Total Request	27,477,072	28,031,155	28,237,783
General Fund	5,111,808	5,602,510	5,673,164
State Special Fund	930,775	980,372	997,760
Federal Fund	21,434,489	21,448,273	21,566,859
Total Request	27,477,072	28,031,155	28,237,783

THE FOLLOWING FIGURES PROVIDE FUNDING AND EXPENDITURE INFORMATION FOR FY 2012 FOR DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITIONS DIVISION



Decision packages (See LFD Budget Analysis, Page B-28)

PL 110 - MTAP Relay Services:

- This decision package requests \$90,525 state special revenue authority for the 2015 biennium.
- This present law adjustment covers the projected costs of minutes used in providing traditional relay services and CapTel relay services for people with severe hearing, mobility, or speech impairments.
- LFD Budget Analysis page **B-28**

Fiscal Year	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2014	\$ 0	\$ 36,817	\$ 0	\$ 36,817
FY 2015	\$ 0	\$ 53,708	\$ 0	\$ 53,708
Biennium Total	\$ 0	\$ 90,525	\$ 0	\$ 90,525

NP 1901 - PRI Vocation Rehabilitation:

- This decision package request \$518,262 authority for the 2015 biennium.
- This new proposal requests a 2% provider rate increase in each year of the biennium for Extended Employment, Independent Living, and other Vocation Rehabilitation providers.
- LFD Budget Analysis page **B-28**

Fiscal Year	General Fund	State Special	Federal Funds	Total Request
FY 2014	\$ 67,384	\$ 0	\$104,226	\$171,610
FY 2015	\$136,116	\$ 0	\$210,536	\$346,652
Biennium Total	\$203,500	\$ 0	\$314,762	\$518,262

Language Appropriation in HB 2:

- The Disability Employment & Transitions Division is appropriated \$775,000 of state special revenue from the Montana Telecommunications Access Program (MTAP) during each year of the 2015 biennium to cover a contingent FCC mandate, which would require states to provide either Video or Internet Protocol relay services for people with severe hearing, mobility or speech impairments.

LEGISLATION

The Division has no pending or requested legislation.